

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BORDEA 00224 01 OF 03 271348Z
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TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: MUNICIPAL ELECTION TRENDS IN THE KEY REGIONAL CITIES
IN THE SOUTHWEST OF FRANCE.

1. THE PRE-ELECTORAL SITUATION BEFORE THE MUNICIPAL
ELECTIONS IN THE SPRING OF 1977 IS VERY FLUID AND COMPLEX
IN THE MAJOR REGIONAL CITIES OF THE SOUTHWEST OF FRANCE
(I.E. BORDEAUX, TOULOUSE, POITIERS AND LIMOGES). HOWEVER,
CERTAIN PRELIMINARY TRENDS CAN BE DISCERNED AND THIS REPORT
IS AN ATTEMPT TO INDICATE WHAT THEY ARE.

2. IN OBSERVING THESE TRENDS IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE
SOCIALIST PARTY PLANS TO MAKE A MUCH MORE DETERMINED
EFFORT THAN IT HAS IN THE RECENT PAST TO WIN THE
MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN BORDEAUX AND TOULOUSE. THESE
CITIES ARE NOW LED BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL
MAJORITY. THE SITUATION IN POITIERS, WHICH IS ALSO
HEADED BY A MEMBER OF THE MAJORITY, (I.E. A GAULLIST)
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PAGE 02 BORDEA 00224 01 OF 03 271348Z

IS STILL TOO AMBIGUOUS WITH THE MAJORITY SPLIT. ANOTHER
TREND ON DISCERN IS THAT THE COMMUNIST PARTY (PCF) IS
EXERTING INCREASING PRESSURE IN ITS SOCIALIST PARTNERS IN
CERTAIN CITIES LIKE LIMOGES TO OBTAIN THE MAXIMUM NUMBER
OF SEATS OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL. THIS IS CAUSING SOME
CONCERN,, ESPECIALLY TO MORE MODERATE SOCIALIST CANDIDATES

WHO SEEM OT WANT TO DO THE MINIMUM NECESSARY TO ACCOMODATE
THEIR PCF COALITION PARTNERS. IN ANYCASE, DIFFICULTIES
CAN BE EXPECTED IN THE DRAWING-UP OF UNITED LEFT LISTS IN
AT LEAST LIMOGES AND TOULOUSE.

3. BORDEAUX.

THE HOTEL DE VILLE OF BORDEAUX HAS BEEN OCCUPIED BY JACQUES
CHABAN-DELMAS SINCE 1947 AND ONE CANNOT SEPARATE BORDEAUX FROM
ITS WELL-KNOWN DEPUTY-MAYOR AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER. CHABAN-
DELMAS HAS SUCCESSIVELY WON PAST LOCAL CAMPAIGNS WITH LITTLE
SERIOUS OPPOSITION FROM THE OPPOSITION PARTIES. THERE HAS
USUALLY BEEN AN ACCOMODATION ALONG THE LINES OF HIS FAMOUS "PASS-
ERELLES" TO THE LEFT AND THE SOCIALISTS HAVE NOT PRESENTED THE
MOST SERIOUS CANDIDATES THEY COULD HAVE TO OPPOSE CHABAN-DELMAS.
FOR EXAMPLE, THIS HAS BEEN THE CASE WITH THE CHOICE OF MARC
BOEUF, THE SOCIALIST MEMBER OF THE CONSEIL GENERAL, WHO IS
A VIRTUAL LOYAL OPPOSITION PARTNER FOR CHABAN. IF MARC BOEUF
WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S CANDIDATE THIS YEAR,
THIS WOULD BE A SIGN OF A CHANGE OF TACTICS ON THE PART OF THE
PS. THIS INDEED HAS HAPPENED AND ROLAND DUMAS, A CLOSE ADVISOR
TO FRANCOIS MITTERAND AND THE PRESTIGIOUS LAWYER FOR PICASSO AND
CHAGALL, WILL BE THE PARTY'S CANDIDATE TO OPPOSE CHABAN IN THE
MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. THE CHOICE OF DUMAS MEANS THAT THE SOCIALIST
PARTY IS GOING TO WAGE A SERIOUS CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHABAN, WITH
NOT ONLY AN EYE ON THE MUNICIPALS BUT ALSO ON THE LEGISLATIVE
ELECTIONS IN 1978. THE CALCULATIONS SEEMS TO BE THAT, EVEN IF
DUMAS DOES NOT BEAT CHABAN IN THE MUNICIPALS, HE AND THE PS CAN
AT LEAST PAVE THE WAY FOR A SERIOUS EFFORT TO UNSEAT THE DEPUTY-
MAYOR OF BORDEAUX IN THE 1978 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS.
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PAGE 03 BORDEA 00224 01 OF 03 271348Z

4. ROLAND DUMAS, IS INDEED A "PARACHUTISTE" IN BORDEAUX CIRCLES.
HIS ALLURE IS VERY UN-BORDELAIS WITH HIS LONGISH HAIR, HIS
AVANT-GARDE CLOTHES AND HIS "DERNIER CRI" PARISIAN BEHAVIOR.
HOWEVER, HE HAS ESTABLISHED HIS RESIDENCE IN BORDEAUX AND A
SECOND COUNTRY HOME OUTSIDE OF THE CITY AND HAS BEEN WORKING
TO ESTABLISH A POLITICAL BASE IN THE CITY. HE HAS MITTERAND'S
STRONG SUPPORT. DUMAS TOLD ME THAT HIS BASIC HOPE IS THAT HE
CAN RIDE THE CREST OF A LEFTIST VICTORY AND LEFTIST SUPPORT
BECAUSE OF FRANCE'S SERIOUS ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES.
IN AN ATTEMPT TO WOO CENTRIST VOTES DUMAS PLANS TO HAVE THE FORMER
REGIONAL PREFECT OF AQUITAINE, GABRIEL DELAUNAY, RUN ON HIS TICKET.
AT THIS POINT, WE HAVE NO REAL INDICATION OF THE ORGANIZATION AND
MACHINERY THAT DUMAS HAS ESTABLISHED, BUT THIS SHOULD BECOME
READILY APPARENT IN JANUARY.

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PAGE 01 BORDEA 00224 02 OF 03 271541Z
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 3 BOURDEAUX 0224

5. THE IMPRESSION WE GET FROM CHABAN-DELMAS' CAMP IS THAT CHABAN WILL WIN THE MUNICIPALITY RACE, BUT THAT A REAL ORGANIZATIONAL AND CAMPAIGN EFFORT WILL HAVE TO BE MADE AND THAT NOTHING CAN BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED IN 1977. CHABAN'S SUPPORTERS, INCLUDING THE "CHARTRONS", HAVE ALREADY BEGUN THEIR ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORTS TO SUPPORT HIM BY HOLDING POLITICAL MEETINGS AND RECEPTIONS WITH A SPECIAL VIEW TOWARD GETTING YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED IN CHABAN'S CAMPAIGN. HOWEVER, IN A MORE INDIRECT BUT IMPORTANT PERSPECTIVE, CHABAN AND HIS SUPPORTERS WILL HAVE TO PAY INCREASING ATTENTION TO THE MUNICIPAL CONTESTS IN THE GREATER URGAN COMMUNITY. FOR EXAMPLE, IF EITHER PESSAC AND ANOTHER CITY IN THE GREATER URBAN COMMUNITY GOES TO THE SOCIALISTS, CHABAN AND THE "PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY" WILL BE IN A DEFINITE MINORITY POSITION AND, BARRING A PERSONAL ACCOMODATION, CHABAN WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN HIS POSITION AS PRESIDENT OF THE URBAN COMMUNITY. THIS WILL BE ANOTHER SLIGHT EROSION OF CHABAN-DELMAS'S LOCAL POLITICAL POSITION. IN THE CANTONAL ELECTIONS LAST YEAR, THE GIRONDE DEPARTMENT SWUNG TO THE LEFT, THEREBY NECESSITATING THE ELECTION

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PAGE 02 BORDEA 00224 02 OF 03 271541Z

OF A SOCIALIST AS PRESIDENT OF THE CONSEIL GENERAL OF THE GIRONDE.
IF THE URBAN COMMUNITY ALSO SHIFTS TO THE LEFT, A SOCIALIST

PRESIDENT WILL PROBABLY BE ELECTED. THESE EROSIONS OF LOCAL POLITICAL POSITION WILL NOT BE HELPFUL TO CHABAN IN HIS RACE FOR THE 1978 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. HOW CHABAN ORGANIZES HIS CAMPAIGN AND WHAT TACTICS HE ADOPTS WILL BE VERY IMPORTANT. IN THIS RESPECT, IT MUST BE ADMITTED THAT HE DOES NOT HAVE THE MOST EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN MANAGERS AROUND HIM AS EVIDENCED BY THE ERRORS COMMITTED IN HIS NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE PRESIDENCY IN 1974. NEVERTHELESS, THE ODDS ARE FOR CHABAN WINNING THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, BUT HOW WELL OR HOW POORLY HE DOES WILL BE EQUALLY IMPORTANT.

6. TOULOUSE.

TOULOUSE IS KNOWN AS "THE PINK CITY" (LA VILLE ROSE) AND THE REGIONAL PREFECT, TONY ROCHE, RECENTLY COMMENTED TO ME THAT HE WOULD NOT DRAW ANY PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS AT THIS POINT THAT TOULOUSE WAS GOING TO BECOME THE "RED CITY" (LA VILLE ROUGE). I THINK THIS COMMENT SUMS UP THE PRE-ELECTORAL SITUATION IN TOULOUSE. THE INCUMBENT MAYOR OF TOULOUSE IS PIERRE BAUDIS, A MEMBER OF GISCARD'S INDEPENDENT REPUBLICAN PARTY. HE IS AN UNCHARISMATIC MAN, TO SAY THE LEAST, BUT A WARD POLITICIAN TYPE WORKER WHO HAS CREATED LITTLE PET PROJECTS WHICH SEEM TO PLEASE THE TOULOUSAINS, AT LEAST IN THE CENTER OF CITY WHERE HIS POLITICAL BASE IS STRONGEST. BAUDIS IS CONDUCTING A VERY DISCREET CAMPAIGN. HOWEVER, ALAIN SAVARY, THE SOCIALIST DEPUTY FROM THE HAUTE-GARONNE, IS ACTIVELY STRIVING, DESPITE HIS AGE, TO WIN THE MUNICIPALITY OF TOULOUSE FROM HIS BASE IN THE THIRD DISTRICT OF THAT CITY. IN SHORT, NO ONE AT THIS STAGE, DESPITE THE STRONG SOCIALIST COMPLEXION OF THE GREATER TOULOUSE AREA, IS PREDICTING AN AUTOMATIC SOCIALIST VICTORY IN THE 1977 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. THE POINT BEING MADE IS THAT THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ARE QUITE DIFFERENT FROM NATIONAL ELECTIONS FOR THE PARLIAMENT AND THAT THE MUNICIPALS ARE MORE PERSONALIZED IN TERMS OF VOTER SUPPORT FOR SPECIFIC PERSONALITIES. THIS FAVORS BAUDIS. ON THE OTHER

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PAGE 03 BORDEA 00224 02 OF 03 271541Z

HAND, THE PS IS FAVORED IN TOULOUSE IN THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS.

7. ONE INTERESTING DEVELOPMENT IS THE REPORTED CANDIDATURE OF MARCEL CAVAILLE, THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORTATION, WHO IS FROM TOULOUSE AND WHO IS SEEKING A PLACE ON BAUDIS' LIST. MADEME BAYLET, THE OWNER OF TOULOUSE'S DAILY NEWSPAPER "LA DEPECHE" AND A VERY IMPORTANT PUBLIC OPINION MAKER, TOLD ME THAT CAVAILLE SHOULD NOT PRESENT HIMSELF BECAUSE HE WILL BRING THE WHOLE COMPLEX OF PROBLEMS INVOLVING AEROSPATIALE (THE PRODUCTION PLANT OF CONCORDE AND AIRBUS, ETC, IN TOULOUSE) INTO THE CAMPAIGN WHICH WILL BECOME AN ISSUE AND DETRACT FROM BAUDIS' TICKET. REPORTEDLY, CAVAILLE WILL FACE ALAIN SAVARY IN THE THIRD ELECTORAL DISTRICT. IN CONTRAST TO THE PREFECT, SHE IS VERY CONCERNED THAT A SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST COALITION WILL TAKE OVER THE CITY.

SHE CONSIDERS SAVARY A "PARACHUTISTE" WHO IS NOT FROM THE AREA AND SAID THAT HER PAPER WILL SUPPORT BAUDIS AND CAMPAIGN AGAINST SAVARY. IN ANY CASE, THE SITUATION IN TOULOUSE IS QUITE PROBLEM-ATIC.

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PAGE 01 BORDEA 00224 03 OF 03 271426Z
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 3 OF 3 BOURDEAUX 0224

8. POITIERS.

THE FORMER UDR DEPUTY AND STATE SECRETARY PIERRE VERTADIER, WHO IS THE MAYOR OF POITIERS, HAS ANNOUNCED THAT HE WILL NOT RUN IN 1977. VERTADIER'S DECISION HAS SPLIT THE MAJORITY AND THERE IS PRESENTLY A GAULLIST CANDIDATE (CHAMARD) WHO IS PRESENTLY THE FIRST ASSISTANT TO VERTADIER AND A PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF POITIERS, AND GRANDON, WHO IS A CDS MEMBER, A FOLLOWER OF LECANUET AND A LAWYER BY PROFESSION. THE SOCIALISTS ARE PLACING SAINTROT, A SOCIALIST PROFESSOR AT THE "ECOLE NATIONALE SUPERIEURE DE MECANIQUE AERONAUTIQUE", AS THEIR CANDIDATE. VERTADIER'S AGE IS ONE OF HIS BIGGEST LIABILITIES AND HE IS BEING PRESSURED BY THE SO-CALLED LEFTWING OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL TO STEP-DOWN. THE "REPUBLICAINS POUR LA REPUBLIQUE" (RPR) CANDIDATE, CHAMARD, WAS THE FIRST TO DECLARE THAT HE WAS IN THE RUNNING. HE IS CONTROVERSIAL AND, CONSEQUENTLY, THE CDS HAS ALSO PLACED A CANDIDATE. NO AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED ON A SINGLE MAJORITY LIST, DESPITE THE INTERVENTION OF JACQUES DOMINATI, WHO CAME TO POITIERS A FEW WEEKS AGO TO TRY TO UNIFY

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PAGE 02 BORDEA 00224 03 OF 03 271426Z

THE MAJORITY. NEGOTIATIONS ARE STILL GOING ON. THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES THINK GRANDON HAS A MUCH BETTER CHANCE THAN CHAMARD TO ATTRACT PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY VOTERS. HOWEVER, IF THE MAJORITY REMAINS SPLIT, THE SOCIALISTS CAN COME TO POWER IN POITIERS.

9. THE PCF AGREES ON SAINTROT'S CANDIDATURE AND SEEMS TO BE CONTENT WITH THE ALLOCATION OF A FEW SEATS ON THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL. IN POITIERS, THE COMMUNISTS DO NOT SEEM TO BE MAKING A MAJOR BID FOR SHARING POWER.

10. LIMOGES.

THE MAYORALTY OF LIMOGES IS HELD BY PIERE LONGEQUEUE, THE SOCIALIST MAYOR OF THAT CITY FOR THE LAST TWENTY YEARS. THE DEPARTMENT OF THE HAUTE VIENNE IN LIMOUSIN, WHERE LIMOGES IS THE REGIONAL CAPITAL, IS HEAVILY SOCIALIST WITH AN IMPORTANT COMMUNIST PARTY PRESENCE (THE LEFT CLAIMS 60 PER CENT OF THE DEPARTMENTAL VOTE). THIS IS ONE OF THE POORER AREAS OF FRANCE AND THE COMMUNISTS HAVE IMPLANTED THEMSELVES ESPECIALLY IN THE RURAL AREAS. IN FACT, RAYMOND CONSTANS, THE SECRETARY OF THE PCF DEPARTMENTAL FEDERATION IN HAUTE VIENNE, MADE A PUBLIC STATEMENT URGING A "HISTORIC COMPROMISE" IN THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ALONG THE LINES OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY. SPECIFICALLY, HE STATED THAT THE PCF WOULD FAVOR AN "OPENING" OF THE UNITED LEFT LISTS IN THE DEPARTMENT TO ALL THOSE WHO AGREE TO FOLLOW THE MUNICIPAL CONTRACTS BASED ON THE LINES OF THE COMMON PROGRAM.

11. LONGEQUEUE IS FAVORED, IF HE DOES PRESENT HIS CANDIDACY ONCE AGAIN, TO WIN THE LOCAL MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN 1977. HOWEVER, HE TOLD ME THAT HE HAS NOT TAKEN ANY FINAL DECISION AND THAT HE IS LETTING HIS "PAWNS" CONDUCT FORAYS TO PUT TOGETHER A TENTATIVE LIST. HE IS DISMAYED BY THE HEAVY PRESSURES ON HIM TO PLACE A LARGE NUMBER OF PCF MEMBERS ON THE LIST. THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF LIMOGES INCLUDES 41 MEMBERS AND THE COMMUNISTS HAVE TOLD HIM THAT THEY WANT MANY MORE SEATS THAN THE 6 SEATS THAT LONGEQUEUE IS PREDISPOSED TO OFFER THEM. THE PRE-ELECTORAL

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PAGE 03 BORDEA 00224 03 OF 03 271426Z

BIDDING IS VERY HEAVY AND A SOURCE OF DISMAY TO THE INCUMBENT MAYOR. ALSO, HE STATED THAT THE COMMUNIST PARTY ITSELF IS HAVING ITS DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN THE SO-CALLED STALINIST AND MORE LIBERAL WING OF THE PARTY. HE STATED THAT THE DIVISION OF FRANCE INTO LEFTIST AND RIGHTIST BLOCS HAS FORCED MANY MODERATE POLITICIANS TO TAKE MORE SERIOUSLY THE PRESSURES EMANATING FROM THE EXTREMISTS, FROM EITHER THE LEFT OR THE RIGHT. FRANCE, HE SAID, HAS

COME TO THE POINT WHERE EXTREMISTS ON BOTH THE RIGHT AND LEFT
PLAY IMPORTANT CARDS IN ELECTIONS SINCE ELECTORAL VICTORIES
TURN ON A FEW NUMBER OF VOTES.

12. IN SHORT, THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN LIMOGES WILL TURN ON
THE MANOEUVERINGS WITHIN THE LEFT ITSELF. TO DARE, NO CANDIDATE
FROM THE MAJORITY HAS OFFICIALLY AND FORMALLY ANNOUNCED HIS
CANDIDACY. DJEREJIAN

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